

had introduced gives the executive branch the authority to fully reimburse the State's Medicaid share it would otherwise have to pay for out-of-state evacuees.

For every evacuee, that is a resident of Texas who cannot afford to be put on Medicaid now, who must survive without health coverage. That is not acceptable. This is a national disaster and a national public health emergency, so the Federal Government should bear the responsibility.

On the plus side, I am pleased to see the announcement by Secretary Leavitt freeing up funding for the four new federally qualified health centers that were scheduled to receive funding in December. While this funding will be a big help, it does mean that we will have to serve more people for a longer period of time than expected. HHS should have the ability to reimburse federally qualified health clinics' costs for serving the uninsured evacuees.

In addition to housing and medical care, childhood education is also a concern. Our local schools have taken thousands of students impacted by Hurricane Katrina, seven school districts that provide education in my own congressional district of Houston. They have taken over 5,000 students in the last week, and we see more students coming every day.

Even though our schools are already at capacity, we are meeting the challenge of educating the children in the gulf coast impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Estimates by the State show this may cost Texas over \$450 million to serve the children that have come to Texas. Currently, FEMA will offer some assistance for these costs, and the Department of Education is unsure of what assistance they can grant. This issue is calling out for a solution by Congress, and we must step up.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot say enough about the efforts of our Mayor White and County Judge Eckels in Houston; but more importantly, their leadership has been more than matched by the efforts of government workers and individual volunteers on the ground. As a result, Houston is showing its best side to the Nation. And I am proud to be part of our relief effort, but our effort is unsustainable without Federal financial assistance.

Hurricane Katrina has devastated Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama. The ability of our local governments to provide vital services is now at risk of devastation as well. We need Federal help in this natural and national disaster.

ANNOUNCING THE AMERICAN PARITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, the clean-up efforts along the gulf coast are now fully under way. The flood wa-

ters of New Orleans are receding, and we are shifting our focus from saving lives to restoring lives.

In the past 2 weeks, Congress has allocated a little over \$60 billion in disaster relief. It is the right thing to do; yet some here in Washington have questioned whether it is money well spent. Others even question whether we should rebuild New Orleans at all. And even after witnessing the horrors of Katrina's aftermath, some say they want to proceed with the tax cut for the wealthiest 1 percent in this country, all the while cutting Medicaid, educational programs, and environmental programs.

Ironically, many of these are the same individuals who have vocally and unequivocally supported aid and the funding requests for rebuilding Iraq. We should be responsible with the people's tax dollars; but we cannot have two sets of books, two sets of priorities, one for the United States and for Iraq.

Here is what we need to do to begin to restore the lives of the people in New Orleans and the rest of the gulf coast:

These Americans need health care, housing, education, clean water. And yet what is the President's budget for this year? A \$60 billion cut in Medicaid, a \$4.3 billion cut in educational programs, a \$1.6 billion cut to police and firefighters, a \$330 million cut to the Army Corps of Engineers, a \$450 million cut to the Environmental Protection Agency.

So the very initiatives that we need right now to help New Orleans and the rest of the folks on the gulf coast are the ones that the President's budget sought to cut back dramatically, and in some cases even eliminate entirely.

At the same time they want to do this, we are spending billions of dollars rebuilding Iraq in the very same areas of education, housing, health care. Here is a listing of Iraq reconstruction projects according to USAID: 2,500 schools have been rehabilitated; 32,000 teachers and administrators have been trained; over the next year up to 100,000 additional teachers will receive in-service training; 84 primary and secondary schools have been established as centers of excellence; we are provided universal health care for every Iraqi; 110 primary health care centers have been renovated; 10 water treatment facilities have been constructed; the Sweet Water Canal System was rebuilt, including the repair of breaches and the levee system; wetlands are being restored; ports are being rebuilt; and the entire transportation program is undergoing a massive renovation and construction program. All the while some are questioning whether we should do this for New Orleans in our backyard.

All the while the President's budget called for cuts in these very areas that we are now spending, appropriately in some cases, for Iraq.

Let me be clear, I am not against spending this money to help restore

the people's lives in Iraq. But we have a budget that was passed with opposition from Democrats to cut educational spending, cut Medicaid spending, cut health care spending, cut education spending, environmental clean-up.

In the coming weeks, I plan on introducing a piece of legislation to ensure that every dollar we spend in helping Iraq restore the communities, help restore the lives of the people there we will spend here in the United States, because we need to do that for New Orleans, we need to do that for the rest of America. But we cannot have two priorities, two sets of books, two sets of values, one for Iraq and one for the rest of America. Those are the wrong values.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are the most generous people in the world. We can do both. We can build America and Iraq. And it is important and imperative that as Americans remain the most generous people in the world, that they cannot think that their kids have less of a future than other countries around the world.

We need to ensure that we invest in America, that the roads and the bridges and the health care and the education and the environmental protection that we have on the laws, that we are investing in those areas. If anything, the horrors in the aftermath of Katrina showed us that America needs today to stand as one, to be invested in as one, that those communities need the same assistance. We cannot pass this budget that calls for cutbacks in the Corps of Engineers, cutbacks of \$60 billion in health care, cutbacks in community health care, all the while singing our own praises about the 3,200 schools we are building in Iraq, the teachers we are training, the universal health care we are providing.

Again, I will remind you, I am not against providing those. I am against the cuts in areas, in the very areas, that we are advocating and investing in in Iraq, cuts in those areas for America. This is the time when the country looks to its fellow citizens, to the government to ensure that they can both restore communities, restore lives, and rebuild those communities.

We need to invest in that area, and like the rest of America, build in America and make sure America stands strong going into the future. It is high time as we talk about our investment in Iraq, which is now close to \$350 billion, that that investment in Iraq, that we look here at home and say, what do we need to do in the areas of health care, education, schools, environmental protection. Because if we build Iraq, we have got to ensure that America stands strong.

METHAMPHETAMINE CRISIS IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for